

## Chesterfield / Colonial Heights

# Inside CSA

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## Spotlight on Success

### Best Practices In Action

#### Team Decision Making Meetings

Over the past year, the Chesterfield/Colonial Heights Department of Social Services has implemented Team Decision Making (TDM) meetings into their scope of services. Team Decision Making meetings allow immediate decisions to be made by a team of individuals who have an interest and play a role in the child's life. The team seeks a consensual decision regarding a placement that both protects the child and preserves or reunifies the family. TDM meetings may be held for decisions involving a removal of a child, change of placement, and reunification/other permanency plan. When possible the TDM meeting is held before a child's move occurs. In cases of imminent risk, a TDM is held before the 5 day hearing.

The fundamental purpose of TDM meetings is grounded by value-driven principles.

#### Core Values:

- ◆ All families have strengths.
- ◆ Families are the experts on themselves.
- ◆ Families deserve to be treated with dignity and respect.
- ◆ Families can make well-informed decisions about keeping their children safe when supported.
- ◆ Outcomes improve when families are involved in decision-making.
- ◆ A team is often more capable of creative and high-quality decision-making than an individual.

The TDM model advises having meetings at specific decision points of a case. Chesterfield-Colonial Heights has implemented TDMs at the following decision points: Emergency Removal and/or Considered Removal Permanency, Planning and/or Reunification

#### Change of Placement and/or Placement Preservation.

The participants of a TDM can be as varied as the number of individuals a child has as a support in their lives. In most cases TDMs consist of the following participants: Parents, Child, Extended family and non-relative supports, Current/Previous caregivers (kin, foster, etc.), Social Worker, Supervisor, Facilitator, Community partners, Service providers, Guardian ad litem and CASA, Other public agency staff and Attorneys.

Since its implementation in June 2009, there have been 112 Team Decision Meetings. Both child and family feedback has been incredibly favorable and several positive outcomes have been achieved. Creative ideas are commonplace and children and families are more connected to plans that they help to develop. The TDM process has been instrumental in keeping children safe, stable and in their communities, which by any standard is success.

### VALUES

The Chesterfield/Colonial Heights Community Policy and Management Team believes the family and home community provides the best environment for raising children and that collaborative activities ensure best service provision.

### CSA MISSION

Our mission is to preserve families by providing community-based services for at risk youth.

### CSA VISION

To ensure the provision of child-centered, family-focused, community-based services.

## CHESTEFIELD/COLONIAL HEIGHTS SYSTEM OF CARE

### Mission:

*To promote a comprehensive system of community based care that strengthens families through collaborative efforts.*

### Vision:

*To be champions for a system of care that drives community practices which promote healthy, productive families within our communities.*

### Guiding Principles:

1. We will protect the rights of all children and families and promote their right to advocate for themselves.
2. We will practice shared responsibility through integrated services among child-serving agencies.
3. We will practice true partnerships with families to provide individualized services for each child and family.
4. We will promote the delivery of services and supports within the least restrictive environment.
5. We will ensure that services are integrated at the system level.
6. We will incorporate prevention, early identification, and intervention supports in effort to improve long-term outcomes.
7. We will practice continuous quality improvement accountability.

## CSA BASICS

### CSA Basics

Last year successes and New Year challenges

Through continued organizational changes and improvements in agency collaboration and family engagement practices, CSA agencies have demonstrated system wide success. Community partners have practiced due diligence to serve children and families efficiently and effectively for positive results:

**12% decrease of children in foster care**

**61% decrease of youth being served from the court system (diverted to other services)**

**6% increase usage of community based services**

These statistics are showing us that a lot of effort and work is being done with families and among agencies to support children in the community. Community agencies are working together to engage families and unearth community resources to sustain healthy families through preventative and positive strengthening measures.

**17 % decrease in total expenditures (\$7.2M to \$5.9M)**

**15% decrease in total case count (284 to 242)**

**15% decrease in length of stay for out of home placements (under 60 days)**

**84% of families reported that the current services where progress was made or the desired outcomes had been obtained.**

**98% of youth reported positively to their experience with the program.**

Years of limited CSA practices focused on crisis responses and mandatory and mostly ineffective services are in the past. ...or are they? Our community has faced tough economic times in the previous three years which resulted in multi-million dollar cuts in human services. This year will be no different. As demonstrated in the past three years, I anticipate that we will carry on and continue to work together to do the best we can with what we have available. Meanwhile, let us continue to partner with families and with each other towards the goal of keeping children safe and with families in their community.

## SOC UPDATE-Family Engagement

### Are we a Family Engaged Community?

Our mission in our System of Care is to promote a comprehensive system of community based care that strengthens families through collaborative efforts. Collaborative efforts primarily include the community's willingness and ability to practice family engagement.

### What is "Family Engagement?"

Family engagement is the foundation of good casework practice that promotes the safety, permanency, and well-being of children and families.

Family engagement is a family-centered and strengths-based approach to partnering with families in making decisions, setting goals, and achieving desired outcomes.

It is founded on the principle of communicating openly and honestly with families in a way that supports disclosure of culture, family dynamics, and personal experiences in order to meet the individual needs of every family and every child.

Engagement goes beyond simple involvement by "motivating and empowering

families to recognize their own needs, strengths, and resources and to take an active role in working toward change" (Steib, 2004).

What are the benefits of Family Engagement?

A key to building a productive case-worker-family relationship, family engagement is the foundation from which change occurs. It is important throughout the life of a child welfare case—from screening and assessment; through case planning and decision-making; to service delivery, case reviews, and ultimately case closure.

To build on a family's resources and kinship connections, family engagement activities focus not only on the immediate family but also on the active involvement of parents, extended family, and the family's natural support systems.

- Positive relationships with families will increase chances for successful interventions
- Families are more likely to be invested and involved in service planning when included in the decision making process

- The team approach with families increases support and service options for children

- Partnering with families increases the quality of services through open and regular communication.

Families become stronger when involved in strength based decision making processes which can ultimately benefit their children.

### What does "Family Engagement practice" look like?

If we were to give any family receiving services from any community agency (or contract provider) the Family Engagement Checklist, they would answer "yes" to each question if our family engagement efforts are successful.

If you have any thoughts or questions, please feel free to contact me at 768-7387 or [reillyk@chesterfield.gov](mailto:reillyk@chesterfield.gov).

## Family Engagement Checklist

### Would our families Say "Yes!"?

- ☐ Does your worker treat your family with respect?
- ☐ Is your worker accessible to you and/or return phone calls in a timely manner?
- ☐ Does your worker meet with your family in a timely manner and flexible to the family's schedule?
- ☐ Does your worker assist your family if there were child care needs conflicting with meetings?
- ☐ Does your worker assist your family if there are transportation needs?
- ☐ Does your worker collaborate with you to identify your family strengths and needs?
- ☐ Does your worker assist with actively seeking out other family members and/or people for support?
- ☐ Does your worker take time to identify individuals who are part of the family with you?
- ☐ Did the worker make every effort to contact identified individuals to participate with the service plan?
- ☐ Do you feel like you can trust your worker?
- ☐ Do you think your worker actively seeks out a positive relationship with your family?



## THE FACES OF FAPT-KAREN ANGELOFF



**Explain your role on FAPT.** I am the private provider representative on a team that is comprised of some wonderful professionals in Chesterfield County. Like the other members, I have my perspective on each case from the community aspect and private provider side of things. As a private provider, I like to work out of the box, so I think I am able to provide some ideas and resources that may not otherwise be considered.

**How long have you been a FAPT member for Chesterfield/Colonial Heights?** I have been a member of the Blue FAPT for almost 3 years and always look forward to seeing what progress, challenges and successes will be presented that month.

**How did you get involved with FAPT?** I have been involved with community-based services for almost 17 years; primarily in providing or supervising in-home services in the Central Virginia area to at-risk youth and their families. As a result I have had a lot of involvement with FAPTs and CPMTs across the region whether it be in the capacity of presenting cases to FAPT as a private provider or serving as a member on teams in various localities. I really appreciate the format and the opportunity to sit around the table with other professionals looking at one situation, but having an array of perspectives; all with the goal of serving our youth and families to the best of our abilities.

**What do you like about being on FAPT?** I come from a strong background of team orientation and collaboration so I really value the power of a forum such as FAPT. I think FAPT is the epitome of what several individuals can achieve when they are brought together. There are a lot of different perspectives around the table but they all come together with some great ideas and direction for the youth. Chesterfield also has a strong relationship with some of the providers in the region that are willing to think out of the box with the team. Creating those plans with those providers has been a lot of fun. I also like seeing each case month-to-month instead of every 3 months. We also have up to an hour for each case that provides us time to really review each case's progress and needs.

**What is your best and/or favorite FAPT success story?** I think Chesterfield has a reputation for going outside of the box when necessary and as a result the success of each youth that comes to the FAPT is increased. I can think of several cases where it was the collaboration and creativity of the team and service providers that created a unique plan resulting in progress and success for that child and their family because their unique needs were being met.

**What is your favorite FAPT office holiday decoration?** I love the little electric snowman globe that is now sitting in the waiting room! (I have actually threatened to take him home with me; hoping they won't notice!)

### DID YOU KNOW.....

CSA now has a "Web Master"! Jane Lanham has been working tirelessly to keep our CSA website posted with the most current CSA information. On the site you will find:

- Information about CSA
- Up to date FAPT forms
- CSA Newsletters
- Resources for families
- General Resources

You can access the CSA web page at:

<http://www.chesterfield.gov/content.aspx?id=3069>



### March is National Social Workers Month

*"It is easy to make a buck. It is a lot tougher to make a difference." ~ Tom Brokaw*

**Hat's off to all of you who chose to make that difference. Our community is stronger because of what you do.**

## 2011 Outstanding Youth Awards

The Chesterfield County Department of Youth Planning and Development is seeking nominations for the 2011 Outstanding Youth Awards. Adults and youths who have demonstrated an exemplary commitment to their communities, neighborhoods or schools are eligible. The deadline to submit nominations is Friday, April 8. Nominees and winners will be recognized at a ceremony on Thursday, April 28, 7 p.m. at L.C. Bird High School.

All nomination forms must be typed. You can also download a form at [chesterfield.gov](http://chesterfield.gov).

For more information, call Youth Planning and Development at (804) 796-7100.